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AUTHOR McGowan, Madelon  
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## ABSTRACT

This grade 7-8 level course guide covers aspects of media communication such as verbal and nonverbal communication theory, forms of modern media (newspapers, feature films, artistic films, music, advertising, etc.), and practice for the student in the various aspects of communication media. The guide is designed for a one-year course and enhances the students' preparation for functioning in the modern environment of multiple-media input channels. The course stresses student participation, for example, in the making of a scratch film, in classroom dramas, in writing skills, and in media analyses. Suggested instructional materials, books, and day-to-day classroom activities are included. (CH)

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**ENGLISH 7-8:**  
**MODERN MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION**

Prepared by Madelon McGowan

OS 500 260

## ENGLISH 7-8: MODERN MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

### INTRODUCTION

Modern Media of Communication is a one-semester, senior elective course which examines some of the forms of modern media--electronic, visual, print, and others--in terms of communication effectiveness.

Two points should be kept in mind while planning and teaching the course:

1. Units should be organized so as to provide a balance of activities in the three areas: language, composition, and literature.
2. Elective classes will be grouped heterogeneously. Teachers should, therefore, provide all students in these classes with opportunities to participate. Materials and assignments should be varied enough to interest or challenge all students, regardless of ability level.

Students currently growing up surrounded by electronic media are often unaware of the basic communication techniques employed in their sources of information. They need to experience and practice communication in varied forms and share these techniques with others. By being part of an active process rather than a passive one, they develop a keen appreciation of the precision required for preparing and delivering a message, no matter what the medium. They also, as members of an audience, need to receive and interpret messages from others with greater insight and perception. Their experience with a media and communication course should render them more sensitive to influence exerted upon them by all media.

### OBJECTIVES

Students should:

Explore various means of communication, especially non-verbal ones which may be less familiar to them.

Examine critically samples of mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television programs, feature films, radio, and advertising.

Practice the language of communicating through gesture, picture, color, and music, as well as through the spoken or printed word.

Participate in listening and watching, as a critical audience, the presentations of others in class.

Develop writing skills through critiques, essays, scripts, and research papers.

Communicate as precisely as possible to an audience in language appropriate to the chosen medium (art, music, writing, film, et al.).

Read current reviews, essays, and books which criticize and comment on modern media.

#### TIME ALLOTMENT

The following are suggested quarter units for the semester course in Modern Media of Communication. Time spent on each unit may vary according to class interest. Descriptions of each quarter unit with appropriate activities are included in the Course Outline.

##### Quarter 1 - Communication Theory

###### Communication - Verbal

Commentaries  
Short speeches  
Original skits  
Improvised drama  
Specialized language  
Others

###### Communication - Non-verbal

Gesture  
Pantomime  
Symbol  
Music  
Collage  
Film  
Others

##### Quarter 2 - Forms of Modern Media

Feature films  
Short films as art form  
Television programs  
Electronic news  
Magazines  
Newspapers  
Music  
Advertising  
(Others)

#### INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

##### STUDENT:

###### Author

###### Title

##### Basic:

Kuhns and Giardino

Behind the Camera, Pflaum, 1970

Kuhns and Stanley

Exploring the Film, Pflaum, 1963

Kuhns and Stanley

Teaching Program: Exploring the Film, Pflaum, 1968

Postman

Language and Reality, Holt, 1966

Supplementary:

Dunston

Worlds in the Making: Probes for Students of the Future.

Felsen

Three Plus Three

Larson

Young Film Makers

Sohn

Film: The Creative Eye

Collateral:

Brown, J. A. C.

Techniques of Persuasion

Dale, E.

How to Read a Newspaper

Friendly, F.

Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control...

Hogen, L. T.

From Cave Painting to Comic Strip

Huss, R.

The Film Experience

Knight, A.

The Liveliest Art

Leavitt, Bay, and Sohn

Stop, Look, and Write

McLuhan and Fiore

The Medium Is the Message

McLuhan, M.

The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man

Packard, V.

The Hidden Persuaders

Peterson, T.

Magazines in the Twentieth Century

Schumach, M.

The Face on the Cutting Room Floor

Seldes, G.

The Public Arts

Smallman, K.

Creative Film Making

Talese, G.

The Kingdom and the Power

White, D.M., ed.

Sight, Sound, and Society

Many other book titles will be found under the headings "Advertising," "Moving Pictures," "Television," "Magazines," "Newspapers," and "Mass Media" in library card catalogs, Also check the bibliographies in the

basic and supplementary texts. News magazines and magazines containing reviews or essays related to media (Time, Life, Saturday Review, Harpers, and others) should be consulted.

TEACHER REFERENCE: (Refer also to student's collateral list.)

| <u>Author</u>         | <u>Title</u>                                                      |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| McLuhan, M.           | <u>Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man</u>                 |
| McLuhan, M.           | <u>The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of <b>Typographic</b> Man</u> |
| McLuhan and Carpenter | <u>Explorations in Communication</u>                              |
| Postman, N.           | Television and the Teaching of English (NCTE)                     |
| Stearn, G. E., ed.    | <u>McLuhan, Hot and Cool</u>                                      |
|                       | <u>Educators' Guide to Media and Methods</u> (magazine)           |
|                       | <u>See</u> (magazine)                                             |

The Union-Tribune Publishing Company supplies packets of materials for teaching the newspaper as a unit. A two weeks' supply of fifteen daily copies of the San Diego Union and films about newspaper production and reporting are available on request at no charge.

The National Council of Teachers of English publishes a number of pamphlets and paperbacks related to the teaching of media. Many of the titles are discounted for Council members. For a copy of the current year's catalog, write The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Champaign, Illinois.

#### AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

Consult the current Audio-Visual Materials Catalog for films and other materials related to media and communication. Many films suitable for a film-study unit in the media elective are held in reserve exclusively for use by film-study teachers. The department chairman or site administrator can secure permission to use these films. Consult The Camera Lens: A Window into the World--Film Study and Film Making (Stock No. 41-F-1050) for further information on the use of film.

#### COURSE OUTLINE

##### Quarter 1 - Communication Theory.

Although this quarter emphasizes language and composition activities, there should be opportunity for students to consult research materials

related to various communications skills. Students should be responsible for reading some material in the general field of media as well. The basic text, Language and Reality, provides material for composition. Chapters 1-7 are particularly helpful as an introduction to this quarter's unit. In them, the author encourages students to establish their own definitions and limitations for the term communication, and discusses some of the basic tools for communicating. The suggestions for composition in the Teacher's Edition are most useful. See the "Commentary to the Teacher" for each chapter.

Below are listed some other activities which provide language and composition experiences:

1. "Icebreaker" Activity. Students pair off with strangers the first day in class to introduce themselves to each other. Each student gives a "thumbnail sketch" of himself to his partner; the partner then asks questions if he feels the need or wants to encourage the other. Each interviewer may take notes if he wishes. Time limit for interviewing is ten minutes. The class then reconvenes as a single group, and each student briefly introduces his partner to the rest of the class.

This activity removes much self-consciousness, since students are concentrating on doing a good job for the persons they introduce, rather than worrying about the impressions they might make on their own behalf.

2. Communication through Gesture and Expression. Class is asked to consider how heavily most people rely on their powers of speech and hearing for communication. They are then asked to experiment with movement and facial expressions alone to convey meaning. Teacher can present sample pantomime situations in impromptu fashion to demonstrate the effectiveness of gesture and expression. These sample pantomimes can be performed by volunteers on the spot, or pantomimists can be selected earlier and given only very general directions. Spontaneity is half the fun! Some sample situations:

-A motorist is trying to park a large car in a small space. Someone happens by and guides him in with hand signals. The motorist has to follow closely every signal he is given.

-A prisoner in a penitentiary has a visitor with an important message. The intercom phone in the visitor's booth doesn't work. The two must rely on gestures through the soundproof window to communicate.

-Several students line up in a cafeteria. They must register their reactions to the food, and interact with the waitresses and each other strictly through movement and expression.

After the sample presentations, students meet in groups no larger than four to plan a pantomime situation. They then improvise

"plot," gestures, and "props" while the rest of the class interprets what they see. Simple "scripts" of each pantomime may be prepared and handed in later.

3. Charades. This is a valuable technique to use throughout the semester. It is a game of pantomime which gets everyone involved, whether he serves as performer or reactor with his audience or team. There are only a few signals agreed upon beforehand; there is a time limit; acting out the titles is largely up to the skill and experience of the performer and the perception of his audience.
4. Improvised Drama. Here, students invent situations where speech is permitted, but words prove to be a hindrance rather than a help in communicating. The participants improvise the "script" as they go along, using their own ideas for situations, or drawing from a collection contributed by the whole class.  
Samples:

-Son asks father for the car and an advance on his allowance. Father is preoccupied with a football game on TV.

-Student tries to explain to the vice-principal why he was off-campus without a pass.

-Girl tries to explain to a boy why she doesn't want to go steady.

-Motorist tries to talk his way out of a ticket with a traffic officer.

Students discuss each dramatic presentation after it is over and try to discover what in each situation was preventing the persons from communicating through speech. Sometimes gesture is more meaningful in improvised drama than is anything spoken. Scripts of the dramas may be written out and handed in later.

5. Music as Communicator. Various types of music can be used to elicit class reaction. Most selections can be supplied by students themselves. Some music can convey an impression of color; many selections convey one or more emotions. Students may react individually in writing, and then compare impressions afterwards.
6. Collage. Each student prepares a collage in which he attempts to portray a single word or an idea. He can use only pictures and color, arranged in the way that is most effective to him. Class must try to interpret his idea. Each student may then react in writing to the collage of his choice, or write a short description of his own collage.

7. Professional Jargon. Students examine samples of professional language (p. 166, Language and Reality). Each then lists words related to a job or hobby familiar to him. He writes a short paragraph, including as many of the listed terms as possible, and reads it aloud to the class. If the group has trouble understanding, the writer "translates." Students often surprise themselves at their "inside" knowledge of professional jargon. Paragraphs should be turned in, together with word lists, for credit.
8. Making a Film. Using clear leader film, the students work in pairs on about five feet of 16mm film per team. Working only with felt pens, they can prepare a "message" in abstract designs and graphic symbols. Each film length takes about fifteen seconds to run through a 16mm projector on silent speed. Film lengths can be spliced together to make a class film. A class committee can select appropriate music to accompany the film. Film makers should turn in a written report explaining their message.

#### Quarter 2 - Forms of Modern Media

This quarter places emphasis on the literature related to media as well as the forms of media themselves. Students might also be responsible for an independent project in media in addition to the class activities listed below:

1. See a feature film, take notes from a professional review of the film (using Reader's Guide to find one), and write a personal review of it in class. Review should contain a reaction to the professional reviewer's opinion.
2. View a film shown on TV. Check TV Guide or a similar magazine for that week to sample a professional critic's opinion. Write a report of the film and personal reactions to it.
3. Watch a TV series for two or three consecutive weeks, or view a TV special. Research a professional review and write a personal review in class. Language and Reality, Chapters 13 and 14, has helpful background information on the television medium.
4. Bring one selection by a favorite musician or performing group to class. Explain briefly the "message" or feeling the music and/or lyrics convey. The teacher should tell the class a little of what he knows about the composer or performer(s).
5. Write an analysis of an out-of-town newspaper.
6. Analyze the front page of a newspaper or a half-hour newscast on a given day. Consult Language and Reality, Part III, for an introduction to interpreting and analyzing news reports.

7. Analyze a TV commercial or a printed advertisement. See Language and Reality, Chapters 11 and 12, for suggestions.
8. Spend two-three weeks of class time viewing and reacting to short art films as a film-study unit. Consult The Camera Lens: A Window into the World--Film Study and Film Making (Stock No. 41-F-1050) for suggestions. The student texts, Exploring the Film and The Creative Eye, are especially valuable for use in a film unit.
9. Take a field trip to a local TV station, an art-film theater, an advertising agency, a newspaper plant, an art museum, or some other media center.
10. Write a profile of a special-interest magazine. Discuss feature articles, ads, photography, and layout.
11. Some ideas for individual student projects are suggested here. The list is only a beginning; students will come up with many more ideas that may be compiled for use by the whole class.
  - Make a film. Several of the basic and supplementary texts offer aids for beginning film makers. This project requires much time outside class.
  - Research a topic related to media; and write a paper. Just a few of the possible subjects: history of movies, film star(s), the western, Hollywood spectacles and the men behind them, horror films, Morse code, old radio or TV programs, history of newspapers, small-town newspapers, Nineteenth Century advertising, singing commercials.
  - Tape an interview with an authority in some field of media, e.g., disc jockey, advertising man, or film-maker.
  - Demonstrate photographic techniques with slides or large photos.
  - Give a report on a cartoon strip, with illustrations or skits.
  - Give a light show.
  - Explain and demonstrate an art or craft.
  - Present a musical program (individual or group).
  - Give a narrated presentation, using slides, photographs, or moving picture footage.
  - Draw or photograph a series of scenes for an animated film.

## EVALUATION

Written tests are not recommended in this elective, since the material is so diverse. A number of other evaluative tools are available: individual and group presentations; written assignments; journals; semester projects; and informal reports, written or oral, of reading completed during the semester.